

107TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 14

To establish a Bipartisan Commission on Social Security Reform.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JANUARY 3, 2001

Mr. PORTMAN (for himself and Mr. CONDIT) introduced the following bill;  
which was referred to the Committee on Ways and Means

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## A BILL

To establish a Bipartisan Commission on Social Security  
Reform.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Bipartisan Commission  
5       on Social Security Reform Act of 2001”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       The Congress finds the following:

8               (1) The 2000 Report of the Social Security  
9       Board of Trustees projects that the receipts financ-  
10       ing the Social Security trust funds will fall below its  
11       outgo in 2015 and the trust funds will be depleted

1 in 2037. At that time only 72 percent of Social Se-  
2 curity benefits would be payable then with incoming  
3 receipts.

4 (2) The primary reason is demographic: the  
5 post-World War II baby boomers will begin retiring  
6 in less than a decade and life expectancy is rising.  
7 By 2025 the number of people age 65 and older is  
8 predicted to grow by 75 percent. In contrast, the  
9 number of workers supporting the system would  
10 grow by 13 percent.

11 (3) If there are no other surplus governmental  
12 receipts, policymakers would have 3 choices: raise  
13 taxes or other income, cut spending, or borrow the  
14 money. Mirroring this adverse outlook are public  
15 opinion polls showing that fewer than 50 percent of  
16 respondents are confident that Social Security can  
17 meet its long-term commitments. There also is a  
18 widespread perception that Social Security may not  
19 be as good a value in the future as it is today.

20 (4) While it is accepted that Social Security re-  
21 form is needed without undue delay, there clearly is  
22 no consensus on how this should be accomplished.  
23 This was evident by the Report of the 1994–1996  
24 Social Security Advisory Council, which provided 3  
25 very different plans but none of which received a

1 majority's endorsement. It also is reflected by the  
2 many bills introduced in the 105th Congress and the  
3 106th Congress and proposals by the administration  
4 that represent a diversity of approaches to Social Se-  
5 curity reform. As a result of differences within Con-  
6 gress and with the administration, there has been no  
7 movement on Social Security reform.

8 (5) This state of affairs shows the need to de-  
9 velop consensus legislation between Congress and  
10 the administration that can be enacted into law  
11 without undue delay. To accomplish this there is to  
12 be established a Bipartisan Commission on Social  
13 Security Reform charged with developing a unified  
14 proposal to ensure the long-term retirement security  
15 of Americans.

16 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF COMMISSION.**

17 There is established in the legislative branch a Bipar-  
18 tisan Commission on Social Security Reform (in this Act  
19 referred to as the "Commission").

20 **SEC. 4. DUTIES OF THE COMMISSION.**

21 The Commission shall design a single set of legisla-  
22 tive and administrative recommendations for long-range  
23 reforms for restoring the solvency of the Social Security  
24 system, and maintaining retirement income security in the  
25 United States.

1 **SEC. 5. COMPOSITION OF THE COMMISSION.**

2 (a) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Commission  
3 shall be composed of 17 members, of whom—

4 (1) 3 members shall be selected by the Speaker  
5 of the House of Representatives, 1 from among  
6 Members of the House, and 2 from among private  
7 citizens;

8 (2) 3 members shall be selected by the majority  
9 leader of the Senate, 1 from among Members of the  
10 Senate, and 2 from among private citizens;

11 (3) 3 members shall be selected by the minority  
12 leader of the House of Representatives, 1 from  
13 among Members of the House, and 2 from among  
14 private citizens;

15 (4) 3 members shall be selected by the minority  
16 leader of the Senate, 1 from among Members of the  
17 Senate, and 2 from among private citizens; and

18 (5) 5 members shall be selected by the Presi-  
19 dent, 2 from among officers of the executive branch  
20 of the United States Government, and 3 from  
21 among private citizens.

22 The Commissioner of Social Security shall be an ex officio,  
23 nonvoting member of the Commission.

24 (b) QUALIFICATIONS.—The members of the Commis-  
25 sion shall consist of individuals who are of recognized  
26 standing and distinction who can represent the multiple

1 generations who have a stake in the viability of the Social  
2 Security system, and who possess a demonstrated capacity  
3 to discharge the duties imposed on the Commission. At  
4 least 1 of the members shall be appointed from individuals  
5 representing the interests of employees, and at least 1 of  
6 the members shall be appointed from individuals rep-  
7 resenting the interests of employers.

8 (c) CHAIR.—The officials referred to in paragraphs  
9 (1) through (5) of subsection (a) shall designate a member  
10 of the Commission to serve as Chair of the Commission  
11 (or 2 of the members of the Commission to serve as Co-  
12 Chairs of the Commission) who shall chair (or jointly  
13 chair) the Commission, determine its duties, and supervise  
14 its staff.

15 (d) TERMS OF APPOINTMENT.—The members of the  
16 Commission shall be appointed not more than 30 days  
17 after the date of the enactment of this Act. The members  
18 of the Commission shall serve for the life of the Commis-  
19 sion.

20 (e) VACANCIES.—A vacancy in the Commission shall  
21 not affect the power of the remaining members to execute  
22 the duties of the Commission but any such vacancy shall  
23 be filled in the same manner in which the original appoint-  
24 ment was made.

1   **SEC. 6. PROCEDURES.**

2           (a) **MEETINGS.**—The Commission shall meet at the  
3 call of its Chair (or Co-Chairs) or a majority of its mem-  
4 bers. If after 30 days after the date of the enactment of  
5 this Act, 9 or more members of the Commission have been  
6 appointed, members who have been appointed may meet  
7 and select the Chair (or Co-Chairs) who thereafter shall  
8 have the authority to begin the operations of the Commis-  
9 sion, including the hiring of staff.

10          (b) **QUORUM.**—A quorum shall consist of nine mem-  
11 bers of the Commission, except that a lesser number may  
12 conduct a hearing under subsection (c).

13          (c) **HEARINGS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.**—For the  
14 purpose of carrying out its duties, the Commission may  
15 hold such hearings and undertake such other activities as  
16 the Commission determines necessary to carry out its du-  
17 ties.

18          (d) **OBTAINING INFORMATION.**—Upon request of the  
19 Commission, the Commissioner of Social Security and the  
20 head of any other agency or instrumentality of the Federal  
21 Government shall furnish information deemed necessary  
22 by the panel to enable it to carry out its duties.

23   **SEC. 7. ADMINISTRATION.**

24          (a) **COMPENSATION.**—Except as provided in sub-  
25 section (b), members of the Commission shall receive no

1 additional pay, allowances, or benefits by reason of their  
2 service on the Commission.

3 (b) TRAVEL EXPENSES AND PER DIEM.—Each mem-  
4 ber of the Commission who is not a present Member of  
5 the Congress and who is not otherwise an officer or em-  
6 ployee of the Federal Government shall receive travel ex-  
7 penses and per diem in lieu of subsistence in accordance  
8 with sections 5702 and 5703 of title 5, United States  
9 Code.

10 (c) STAFF AND SUPPORT SERVICES.—

11 (1) STAFF DIRECTOR.—

12 (A) APPOINTMENT.—The Chair (or Co-  
13 Chairs) in accordance with the rules agreed  
14 upon by the Commission shall appoint a staff  
15 director for the Commission.

16 (B) COMPENSATION.—The staff director  
17 shall be paid at a rate not to exceed the rate  
18 established for level V of the Executive Sched-  
19 ule under section 5315 of title 5, United States  
20 Code.

21 (2) STAFF.—The Chair (or Co-Chairs) in ac-  
22 cordance with the rules agreed upon by the Commis-  
23 sion shall appoint such additional personnel as the  
24 Commission determines to be necessary.

1           (3) APPLICABILITY OF CIVIL SERVICE LAWS.—

2           The staff director and other members of the staff of  
3           the Commission shall be appointed without regard to  
4           the provisions of title 5, United States Code, gov-  
5           erning appointments in the competitive service, and  
6           shall be paid without regard to the provisions of  
7           chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53 of such  
8           title relating to classification and General Schedule  
9           pay rates.

10          (4) EXPERTS AND CONSULTANTS.—With the  
11          approval of the Commission, the staff director may  
12          procure temporary and intermittent services under  
13          section 3109(b) of title 5, United States Code.

14          (d) PHYSICAL FACILITIES.—The Architect of the  
15          Capitol, in consultation with the appropriate entities in the  
16          legislative branch, shall locate and provide suitable office  
17          space for the operation of the Commission on a non-  
18          reimbursable basis. The facilities shall serve as the head-  
19          quarters of the Commission and shall include all necessary  
20          equipment and incidentals required for the proper func-  
21          tioning of the Commission.

22          (e) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES AND  
23          OTHER ASSISTANCE.—

24                 (1) Upon the request of the Commission, the  
25          Architect of the Capitol, the Commissioner of Social



1 Security, and the Administrator of General Services  
2 shall provide to the Commission on a nonreimburs-  
3 able basis such administrative support services as  
4 the Commission may request.

5 (2) In addition to the assistance set forth in  
6 paragraphs (1) and (2), departments and agencies of  
7 the United States may provide the Commission such  
8 services, funds, facilities, staff, and other support  
9 services as the Commission may deem advisable and  
10 as may be authorized by law.

11 (g) USE OF MAILS.—The Commission may use the  
12 United States mails in the same manner and under the  
13 same conditions as Federal agencies and shall, for pur-  
14 poses of the frank, be considered a commission of Con-  
15 gress as described in section 3215 of title 39, United  
16 States Code.

17 (h) PRINTING.—For purposes of costs relating to  
18 printing and binding, including the cost of personnel de-  
19 tailed from the Government Printing Office, the Commis-  
20 sion shall be deemed to be a committee of the Congress.

21 **SEC. 8. REPORT.**

22 Not later than 6 months after the date of the first  
23 meeting of the Commission, the Commission shall submit  
24 to the Committee on Ways and Means of the House of  
25 Representatives and the Committee on Finance of the

1 Senate a report which shall contain a detailed statement  
2 of the findings and conclusions of the Commission, includ-  
3 ing the set of recommendations required under section 4.  
4 The report shall be approved by at least nine members  
5 of the Commission.

6 **SEC. 9. TERMINATION.**

7 The Commission shall terminate 30 days after sub-  
8 mitting its final report.

9 **SEC. 10. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

10 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums  
11 as may be necessary for the activities of the Commission.  
12 Until such time as funds are otherwise specifically appro-  
13 priated for such activities, \$2,000,000 shall be available  
14 for the activities of the Commission from funds otherwise  
15 currently appropriated for administrative expenses of the  
16 Social Security Administration pursuant to section  
17 201(g)(1)(A) of the Social Security Act.

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